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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

## SUMMER SKETCHING.

By EMMA HAYWOOD.



THE time is rapidly approaching when once more armed with pencil and brush we sallie forth to take Dame Nature for our guide and instructor, nor can we do better even though we have had but little practical training. Even failure, if we are true lovers of art, will inspire us to better fit ourselves for a future campaign, teaching us at the same time wherein our weakness lies. Spring has peculiar charms for the sketcher from more than one point

of view, the budding foliage, the tender coloring and freshness of nature waking into life offer charming food for contemplation and study for those who propose to make landscape their specialty. Again, for those who love flower painting, there can be nothing better to offer for their consideration than the many kinds of fruit blossoms bursting into life, and the sweet wild flowers that oftentimes are so much more picturesque than their cultivated sisters.

We will commence with a few simple suggestions for flower sketches to be stored for future use. Only those who possess it know how invaluable is a portfolio filled with careful studies taken direct from nature, how in the gloom of winter, when the originals are not attainable, they help us in our decorative work, suggesting motives according to our needs. In order that they may prove of real service great attention must be paid to the drawing, growth and peculiar characteristics of each particular plant or flower, these must be carefully noted for they are of much more real importance than elaborate finish or high coloring. If water color be the medium employed, the materials required are few and simple. Two or three good brushes of assorted sizes, and a comparatively few colors, but these must be of the very best make, also a bottle of Chinese white. The most convenient form for carrying moist water colors is in a tin box which likewise forms a palette when open.

Suggestions for choosing the most useful colors may be found of service to those with little experience. I have noticed, as a general rule, that in the boxes ready fitted, some of those colors absolutely necessary are left out while other almost useless or easily dispensed with, are substituted; the reason for this is not very clear. It is, therefore, certainly advisable to buy an empty box and fill it yourself. Winsor and Newton's is a well known and very reliable make, easily obtainable in this country. For a serviceable palette choose ivory black, neutral tint, Vandyke brown, raw umber, burnt sienna, raw sienna, yellow ochre, Indian yellow, chrome yellow, lemon yellow, Naples yellow, Venetian red, scarlet vermilion, crimson lake, rose madder, indigo, Antwerp blue, and cobalt. Almost any given tint can be evolved from these colors, so that, supplied with such a list, failure cannot be attributed to want of proper material.

The paper selected must depend much on our method of working. For very light and white flowers the best and quickest effects can be obtained by painting on tinted paper and using Chinese white where necessary.

For dark flowers or foliage plants take white paper in preference and dispense with the Chinese white.

To sketch from plants that are growing is more satisfactory practice than using the flowers as models after they are plucked, for in this case they do not so well designate their growth, and are apt to change quickly especially in a warm room. A bit of old stone wall covered with lichen over which ivy or some kind of trailing vine is growing is not only admirable as a study but forms a pleasing picture. A sedgy pool with water lilies floating on the surface or bordered with reeds and other aquatic plants forms a delightful subject, water is not difficult to paint if you note well the manner in which it takes reflections and depict them carefully, the transparent effect depends entirely on the rendering of these reflections. A mossy bank on which grows a clump of wild flowers, the broken stump of a tree imbedded in long feathery grasses, these and many more such simple aspects of nature suggest themselves as much more suitable for a student than more ambitious and comprehensive work.

When sketching work with as much freedom as possible. Do not endeavor to gain your effects by means of faint washes often repeated until the required strength is obtained but strike a key note at once by putting in with decision the darkest shadows, and brightest lights as near as possible to the truth, not only will this method save much time, it will also give a transparency and richness scarcely obtainable otherwise, always provided that you work with a full brush. Dragging the color on with insufficient moisture always gives a murky, heavy look much to be deprecated. Another advantage occurring from strength and freedom

of touch is that just so soon as you have obtained the desired effect your work for practical purposes is finished, and however rough the study may be it supplies all the required material for more finished work at your leisure in the studio. Never retouch the sketch itself away from the model employed, you will most likely do more harm than good, an inspiration drawn directly from nature is invaluable and best left alone for reference.

To commence sketches such as have been suggested offers no peculiar difficulty to the inexperienced, but a few hints for starting subjects of a wider scope may be acceptable. Many times the question is asked how shall I begin; the novice having selected his standpoint pauses pencil in hand, the size of the paper or canvass to be used is definitely settled; not so the extent of the view to be included within its limits. At last an attempt is made to begin without any very clear idea as to what is being aimed at, a faint hope being entertained that matters will somehow right themselves. Now this haphazard way of going to work is highly unsatisfactory and likely to end in failure and disappointment, it is half the battle to know exactly what you are aiming at.

A very simple expedient will help you to decide the extend of the view to be included. Take a piece of cardboard and cut out in the centre of it the size of the material you are about to paint on, hold this frame vertically in front of you and gazing through it without turning your head you will be able to see exactly what part of the view should be included in your picture, therefore it will be easy to decide the proportions of objects to be represented.

The next step is to fix the point of sight. To do this, the horizon line must first be found. Some knowledge of perspective is really indispensable to the would be sketcher, yet strange to say very many amateurs do not take the trouble to study even the elementary rules of this most interesting science, thereby increasing greatly their difficulties when bent on a sketching expedition. Let it be remembered then that the horizon line no matter from what given standpoint is always on a level with the spectator's eye, you can decide where that level is by balancing a pencil horizontally at arms length exactly even with your eyes; where the pencil divides the view will be found the horizon line so that it is just as easy to find it though intercepted by trees and mountains as when sitting on the seashore where the boundary line between sea and sky shows most plainly.

Having found the horizon line and marked its position on your paper, this as a general rule should be placed about one third from the lowest edge, next fix the point sight, this must always be exactly opposite to you, although it will not necessarily be in the centre of the picture. You can find it by holding the pencil vertically at arms length, close one eye and then you will see clearly where the pencil cuts the ascertained position of the horizon line and exactly at that spot is the point of sight.

If we place the horizontal line too high in the picture, that is to say, imagine ourselves placed at too great an elevation we make our sketch into what is understood as a birds eye view. If on the contrary we place it too low the proportion of sky will be exaggerated.

By means of the point of sight we can fix the just proportions of any given object in the picture, but in order to do this with ease I should advise my readers to work out a few elementary rules in perspective repeating the practice until they are learned by heart.

Next to linear perspective and scarcely less in importance comes the consideration of aerial perspective and on the proper management of this in a greater or lesser degree depends the success and value of the picture.

Be it observed then that all distant objects being directly under the effect of the sky will partake in their coloring something of the azure or other tints in the sky, and therefore should to a certain extent be laid in with the sky tints modified. Very little detail should be introduced either in contour or tint. Distant objects must be treated broadly in masses of light and shade. The local color of objects decreases with distance and the air tints increase on account of the greater amount of atmosphere intervening. Dark objects part with their color more quickly as they retire than light ones.

In painting middle distances where objects gradually become clearer it is of the utmost importance to judiciously and imperceptibly unite the strength of the foreground with the hazy indistinctness of the far distance; it will be found necessary in order to do this to introduce greater warmth of coloring by means of yellower tones such as given by the aid of yellow ochre. Right in the foreground weeds, grasses, rocks, stones, etc., must be drawn with the greatest accuracy and precision. At the same time they must not be so minutely detailed and elaborated as to interfere with the general harmony of the picture. Bear in mind also that vegetation must never be represented by raw greens, which are always disagreeable in effect. In painting water it will be found that the colors reflected lose a portion of their brightness, while the slightest ripple disturbs the continuity of reflections giving them a broken zigzag character. It is a frequent mistake with beginners to paint water too light for its surround-

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ing banks, and in so doing they throw the whole scheme out of harmony. I would advise the inexperienced to study well the treatment of water under different aspects by masters of known repute; they will find the knowledge thus gained of great use to them.

Kindly I would ask my readers not to be discouraged by apparent failure in first attempts, but to persevere steadily, and after a time when comparing their latest with their earlier efforts, I venture to predict that they will find sufficient encouragement to cheer them on their way to still greater proficiency.

### CARPET DESIGNS.

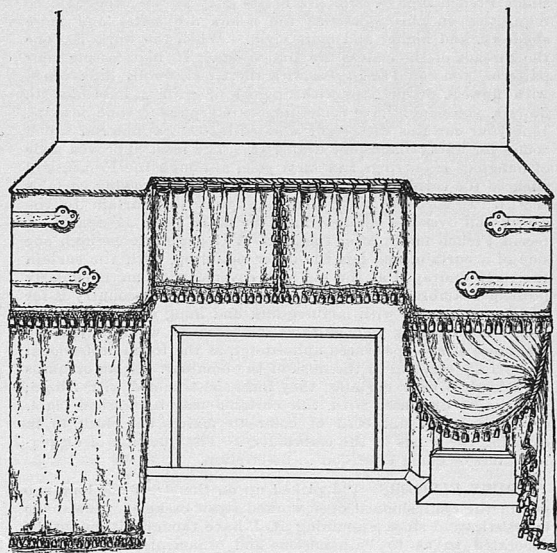
**T**HE multitude of carpet designs turned out each successive season illustrate the versatility brought to bear on this branch of art. In addition to securing novelty and pleasing effects the manufacturer and designer have to gauge, as it were, in advance the tendencies of public taste. Many influences operate to frame and shape this concurrent taste, some of them traceable, others obscure. There is constant action and reaction between the public and art. Ordinarily any decided changes of style are gradually developed, and thus the golden mean of change is found. A few of the leading principles underlying carpet design may here be glanced at.

A delicate style of rendering the forms in addition to a correct balance and scale of parts, with a harmonious combination of colors are unfailing characteristics of ornamentation when good. For repetition those forms are best which are not in themselves subjects of prominent interest. Such are the simple geometrical or rigid conventionalized figures seen in eastern rugs, their very simplicity and absolute unsuggestiveness having a certain quiescent effect however often repeated; indeed, they are only saved from tameness by the strength of the contrast of the colors and touches of brilliance; after all, they appear best as foils to our more artistic creations. The extreme views formerly held as to the extent to which natural forms such as flowers and foliage must be conventionalized to justify their appearance in carpet designs have been generally foregone; there is sufficient conventionalism in the difference of aspect resulting from the nature of the material, mode of working and the freedom accorded to the designer of introducing on occasion other than natural colors. In a wreath of flowers the arrangement itself is artificial. There is again much tasteful ornamentation that cannot be traced to a distinct source; it serves its purpose if graceful and suitable in stimulating the fancy of the beholder. Geometric rules undoubtedly underlie effective grouping, but it is not necessary for a satisfactory design that this element should be apparent. It even consists with apparent irregularity, where returning forms occupy different relative positions, as if disposed at the caprice of the designer. In the forms that contribute to a pattern details should be carefully subordinated to leading lines. The right proportioning of interspaces is quite as important as good an arrangement of color. As to the colors, an undue accumulation of these will only result in crude effects, producing a certain restlessness of aspect. Marvels of beauty in design are producible with only a few colors, variations of tints being always available. Similarly, with an excess of detail in form, the design will lose character and become meaningless. With the commoner or cheaper descriptions of carpets, the endeavor to disguise the character of the material often leads to the fussiest kinds of patterns; the carpets, in such case, are worried all over. Subdued and well balanced compositions, showing breadth and repose, constitute the triumphs of art. This is not to say that with the more brilliant furnishing of interiors that prevails, a large proportion of carpet designs may not display luminous colors; such colors need not be dark or unduly warm; some of the lightest hues are characterized by extreme vivacity. Whilst the borders of carpets should always be darker than the rest of the surface, the less that gradated hues are introduced the better, as rendering them more distinctive. The introduction into a border of some of the colors of a general pattern draws attention to and more fully emphasizes the corresponding colors in the latter, a circumstance that constitutes a serviceable artistic resource. Very pleasing and effective contrasts between the treatment of the border and the field are secured by dividing it into two parallel bands, each with separate designs, such as flowers and arabesque work. There are two modes of regarding a carpet as a work of art. The one relates to the way in which the objects depicted are sought to be shown, embracing composition, color, light and shade and other technical qualities; the second is the ideal view that concerns the associations suggested, and the sensational or other pleasurable effects induced.

Brilliant colors in great quantity are by no means necessary for rich effects; the expert designer reserves them for heightening touches. When used in profusion the eyes refuses to recognize their value and quickly becomes wearied; notwithstanding

all the brilliance there is a certain heavy effect, the exact reverse being the case with colors that are delicate and full of light. The greatest proof of good coloring is a pleasant sense of warmth and breadth, a perception of the general effect of the hues rather than their detailed display. Where the minutiae of color is praised, the probability is that the designer has committed some blunder. Merely to touch upon the point of artistic correctness as between color of ground and figures, it may be mentioned as a key to the whole science of harmonious contrasts that a red orange is suitable to a bluish green ground, a blue purple to yellow orange, and a reddish purple to yellowish green, orange being the contrasting color of blue, red of green and purple of yellow. Figures of purple, or red, or brown will be well displayed on a blue gray ground; pearl blue or turtle dove gray on light gray; primrose silver yellow on light coral red, carnation or lakey red on silvery green; a greenish hue on ground of light neutral blue. Neutral grays and also transparent browns are properly favorite grounds with designers. Brown serves as shade for all colors, and also gives support to cool colors. Subdued tones which represent the diminishment of light ordinarily appear to more advantage than strong and vivid colors. They more readily admit of harmonious blendings and are not apt to pall the sense of sight. Green obtains its best effect by juxtaposition with pale colors, provided the latter are sufficiently bright. When colors are in contact that lie near to each other in the chromatic scale, they are usually wanting in strength and force; such combinations are the resort of timid designers to secure harmony. Good combinations may be formed of purplish violet, bluish green and orange; of bluish violet, green and vermilion; of turquoise blue, yellow and purple; violet and light rose color, deep blue and golden brown; chocolate and light blue, deep red and gray, maroon and warm green, deep blue and pink, chocolate and pea-green, maroon and deep blue, claret and buff, black. Whatever the colors employed, the bases of due proportion, not less important in color than in form, must be recognized to secure for designs any decisive charms.

**T**AKING the work up as a pastime, ladies may advantageously and at their leisure engage in making freize ornaments for walls otherwise bare, such as cinque cento ornaments or wreaths of flowers. Owing to the nature of the material, the designs may be carried out with the utmost delicacy, rivalling, indeed, the most costly carving with its elaborate undercutting. The wreaths may be made so light as to have scarcely appreciable weight. Such apparent weight as to seem to need to be strongly sustained is always a drawback to attached ornaments. These may be readily picked out in gold and colors. As a memento of individual skill good leather work, whether on walls, center of panels, toilet boxes or picture frames, will always be pleasing.



MANTEL DRAPERY IN SILK AND PLUSH, BY W. A. BROCK.

The top of the board is to be covered in satin, the square valance in satin with plush bands or hinges, the small curtains in center of plush made so that if there is a fire underneath they can be parted. The lower curtains are also of plush with loops so they can be dropped, as seen in the engraving.